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SHOPPING HABITS AND PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC

WHILE locational advantages are of relatively small importance when dealing with residential properties, they become vital considerations whenever commercial properties are involved. In the early days of our country's history before the invention of rapid mass transportation, locational advantages were even greater and of more importance than today In those days if all retail space was taken up, a new entrepreneur could not build his establishment on the edge of town because too few customers could get out to patronize his store. Today, the use of rapid transportation and the automobile has made possible and hastened the decentralization of the central districts It is now possible for a strong merchant to begin operations at an entirely new location where little or no retail merchandising has preceded him and to establish his own "100%" location. He can do this if he chooses a location near mass transportation lines and provides an adequate parking area. It is this tendency toward decentralization that has caused urban land values to show a downward trend during the last thirty or forty years.*

Although locational advantages are not so great as a generation ago, they are nevertheless still vitally important when considering retail outlets Retail outlets are the principal type of urban properties where locational advantages and the economic rent thereby created exist to a high degree. In central business districts and outlying buying centers, the retail stores or establishments closest to the largest volume of purchasing power from the passing pedestrian traffic are considered the best or 100 per cent locations Other locations within such districts vary from the best to the poorest which must be used for distribution within the district. Some locations become 100 per cent locations for a particular class of merchandise because the composition of passing traffic contains the largest purchasing power for such merchandise; however, the department store which distributes all types of merchandise of average quality is best suited for the sites with greatest locational advantages.

These so-called 100 per cent locations usually warrant the greatest expenditures of capital and labor to develop their full productivity and create their full economic rent and land values. The enterprise itself must expend capital and labor on its shopping space to provide the greatest advantages and conveniences to the shoppers, must provide the highest ability in merchandising and management and must expend for advertising such sums of money so long as they continue to

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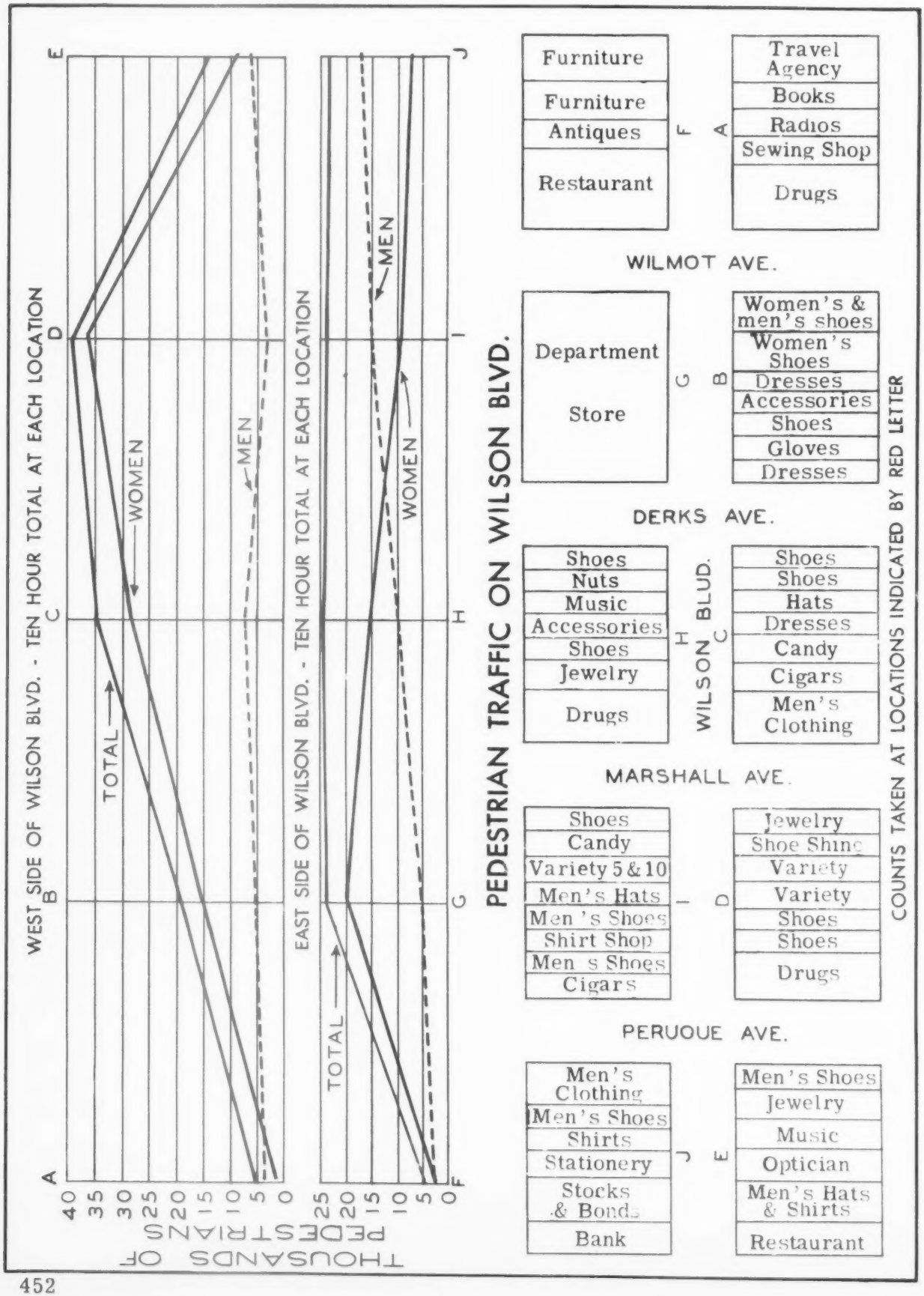
*Urban land values have not all shown a downward trend. In fact, some are higher today than ever before because of the continued development of mass transportation advantages, enabling these locations to serve more and more people.


PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC ON WILSON BLVD.
COUNTS TAKEN AT LOCATIONS INDICATED BY RED LETTER
WEST SIDE OF WILSON BLVD. - TEN HOUR TOTAL AT EACH LOCATION
EAST SIDE OF WILSON BLVD. - TEN HOUR TOTAL AT EACH LOCATION
THOUSANDS OF PEDESTRIANS
TOTAL
WOMEN
MEN
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
WILMOT AVE.
DERKS AVE.
MARSHALL AVE.
PERUQUE AVE.
WILSON BLVD.
Furniture
Furniture
Antiques
Restaurant
Travel Agency
Books
Radios
Sewing Shop
Drugs
Department Store
Women's & men's shoes
Women's Shoes
Dresses
Accessories
Shoes
Gloves
Dresses
Shoes
Nuts
Music
Accessories
Shoes
Jewelry
Drugs
Shoes
Shoes
Hats
Dresses
Candy
Cigars
Men's Clothing
Shoes
Candy
Variety 5 & 10
Men's Hats
Men's Shoes
Shirt Shop
Men's Shoes
Cigars
Jewelry
Shoe Shine
Variety
Variety
Shoes
Shoes
Drugs
Men's Clothing
Men's Shoes
Shirts
Stationery
Stocks & Bonds
Bank
Men's Shoes
Jewelry
Music
Optician
Men's Hats & Shirts
Restaurant

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produce a profitable return. Only by developing full productivity can the advantages of location be developed to the full use of the land and create the highest economic rent applicable to the land.

Shopping habits as represented by the streams of pedestrian traffic indicate only a possible or potential purchasing power for the location which it passes. Any volume count of this traffic is quite useless, unless an analysis of the sex, race, type, economic status, movement and purpose of the traffic is also made. Only from such a classification can the probable potential purchasing power of the traffic be measured.

Any desired classification of both men and women can be made by a competent checker provided it can be done by the appearance of the persons passing. The great differences in volume, type and quality of pedestrian traffic in adjacent blocks or on opposite sides of the same block or lane traffic to and from transportation stops represent definite patterns of shopping habits which are alike in principle, but distinctive for each city. (See chart on opposite page.)

The patterns of pedestrian traffic are formed by mass transportation routes and transportation stops, transfer intersections, the continuity of retail uses and, especially, by large department stores. Skyscraper office buildings are seldom a help and sometimes detrimental to shopping districts. Banks, public buildings, parks, etc., are incongruous and incompatible uses and tend to destroy harmonious shopping sections because they tend to prevent the advantages and conveniences of shopping. In most large cities there is a distinct separation of incongruous uses. The financial districts and civic centers are generally located entirely outside of the intense shopping areas.

While all-day traffic counts are desirable (we have made as many as 70 full-day counts on a job), they are not always necessary. When trying to establish the relative value of two or more locations, it is frequently sufficient to take two 1-hour counts per day. The best time to take these counts is usually from 10:15 A.M. to 11:15 A.M. and from 2:15 P.M. to 3:15 P.M. The selection of these hours has the advantage of eliminating any "adulteration" of the traffic stream caused by people going to and from work or office workers on their lunch hour. The type of store involved in the traffic count also will have considerable bearing on the type of count taken. For instance, a cigar store or tobacco shop can consider every smoker who passes its door as a potential customer each time he passes, regardless of the reason that person is on the street. Therefore, an all-day count of men (very few women patronize tobacco shops) passing the store should be made.

The management of a men's hat store would be interested in the number of men passing its location in a full day and would doubtless want this male traffic segregated into 1. executive type men; 2. well dressed young men; 3. laboring class men; and 4. other types

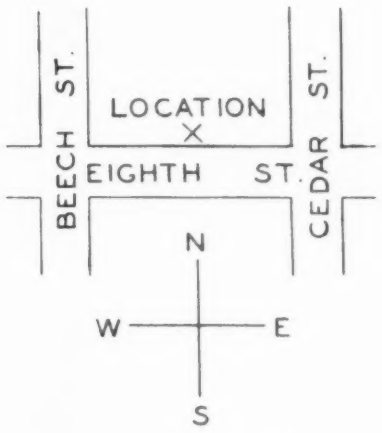
Regarding corner counts, we have found them difficult to take and full of duplications. It does not take much observing of corner traffic to see why this is so. People loiter, pace to and fro, start down one street, then turn and come back. It

(cont. on page 456)

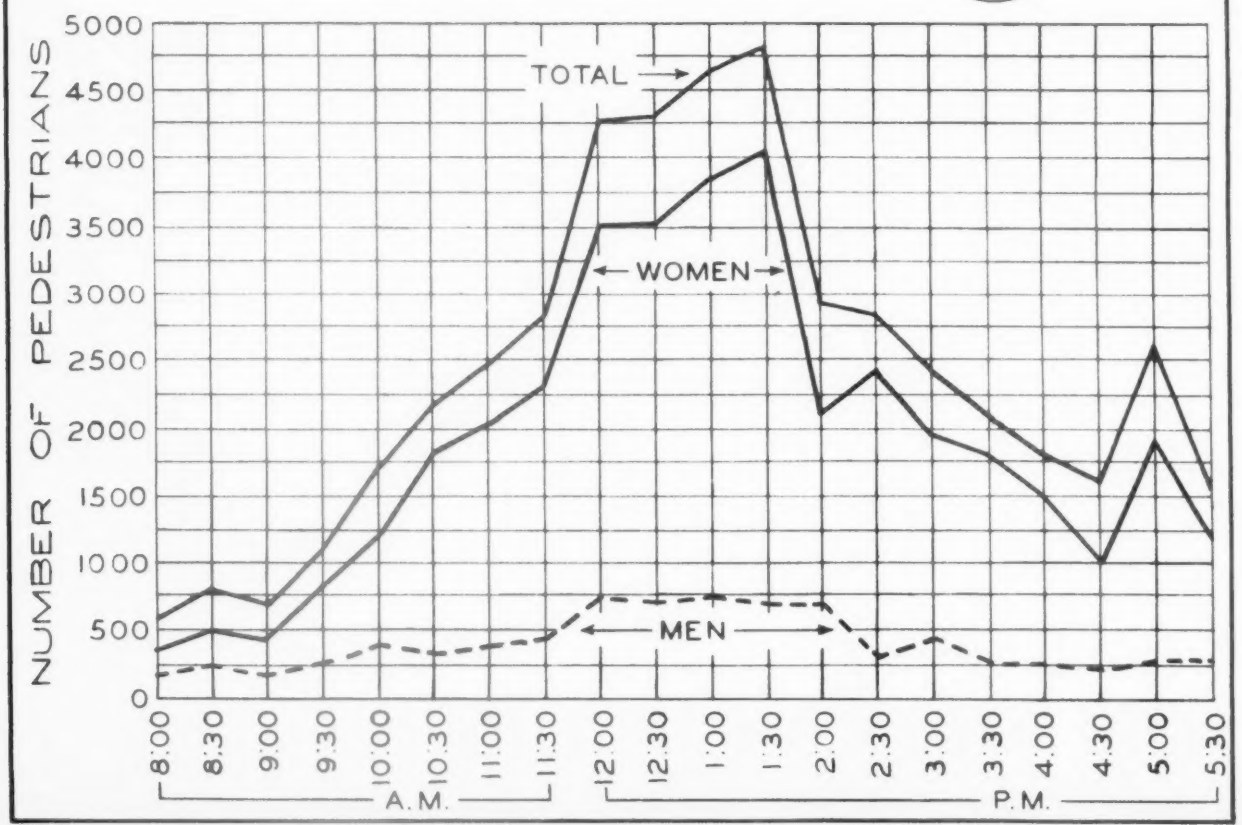
TRAFFIC COUNT IN FRONT OF JORDAN'S SHOE STORE

TRAFFIC COUNT

	Time	Men	Women	Total
A.M.	8:00- 8:30	225	397	622
	8:30- 9:00	269	549	818
	9:00- 9:30	225	483	708
	9:30-10:00	290	886	1,176
	10:00-10:30	436	1,299	1,735
	10:30-11:00	381	1,860	2,241
	11:00-11:30	418	2,071	2,489
	11:30-12:00	482	2,368	2,850
P.M.	12:00-12:30	759	3,523	4,282
	12:30- 1:00	742	3,553	4,295
	1:00- 1:30	770	3,894	4,664
	1:30- 2:00	736	4,098	4,834
	2:00- 2:30	737	2,186	2,923
	2:30- 3:00	376	2,480	2,856
	3:00- 3:30	478	1,991	2,469
	3:30- 4:00	300	1,832	2,132
	4:00- 4:30	296	1,529	1,825
	4:30- 5:00	258	1,306	1,564
	5:00- 5:30	344	2,222	2,566
	5:30- 6:00	338	1,271	1,609
	Total	8,860	39,798	48,658



Date - 9-30-48
Day of week - Thursday
Weather - Fair
Max. temp. - 80° at 3:00 P.M.
Min. temp. - 65° at 8:00 A.M.



TRAFFIC DENSITY

PERCENTAGE OF EACH TYPE ON STREET AT VARIOUS HOURS

Hours	A	B	C	D
8:00- 9:00	1.7%	6.7%	6.0%	5.6%
9:00-10:00	3.0	3.1	7.6	6.7
10:00-11:00	6.9	3.0	7.9	8.9
11:00-12:00	9.7	7.8	13.3	11.8
12:00- 1:00	13.3	29.5	19.6	21.0
1:00- 2:00	14.0	16.7	17.9	12.8
2:00- 3:00	16.4	6.6	9.3	9.7
3:00- 4:00	15.9	5.3	7.7	8.4
4:00- 5:00	11.9	9.6	6.0	7.6
5:00- 6:00	7.2	11.7	4.7	7.5
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

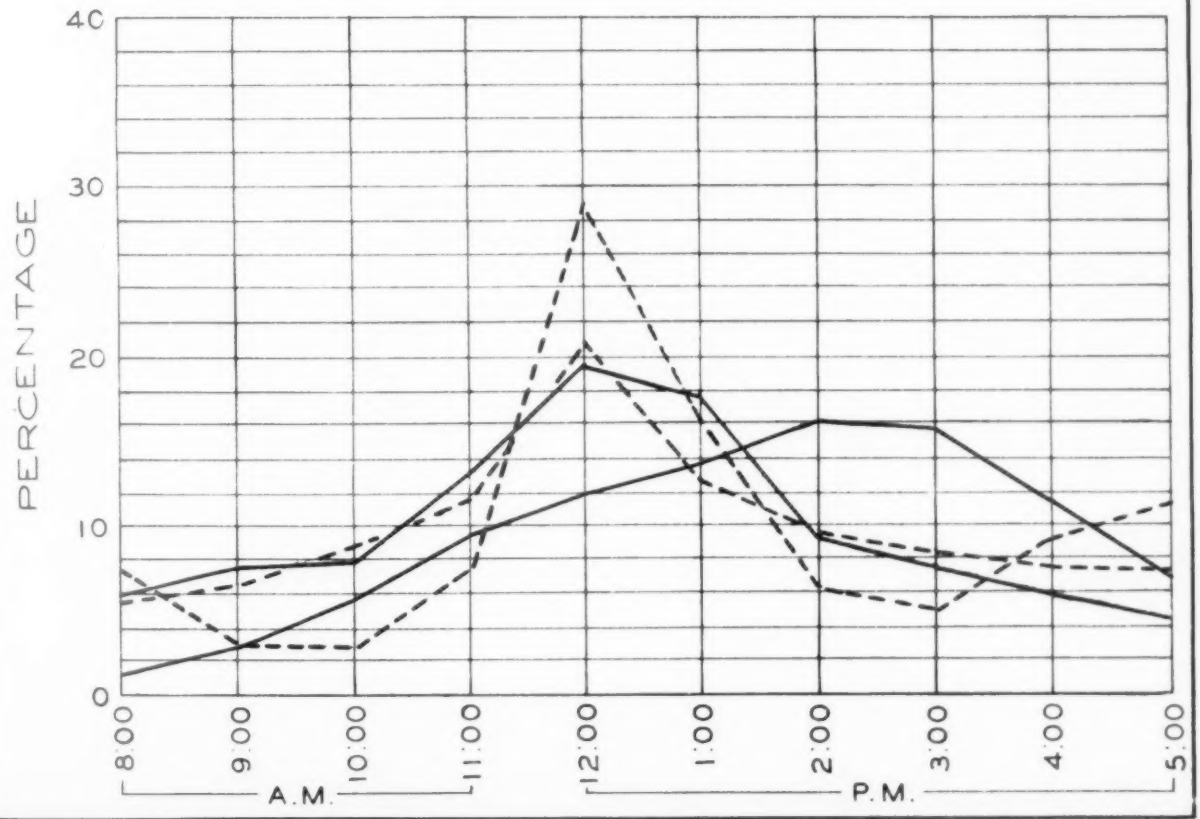
A. Women family shoppers ——

B. Women ind. shoppers - - - - -

C. Men, exec. & prof. type ——

D. Men, clerical type - - - - - - -

Notice that most (29.5%) type B shoppers are on the street at noon and that type A shopping is heaviest from noon until 4:00 P.M. The two types of men shoppers are on the street in greatest numbers from noon until 2:00 P.M.



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becomes virtually impossible for one man to count the traffic without considerable duplication. Recommended spots for counting traffic passing corner stores are shown in the diagrams on the page opposite.

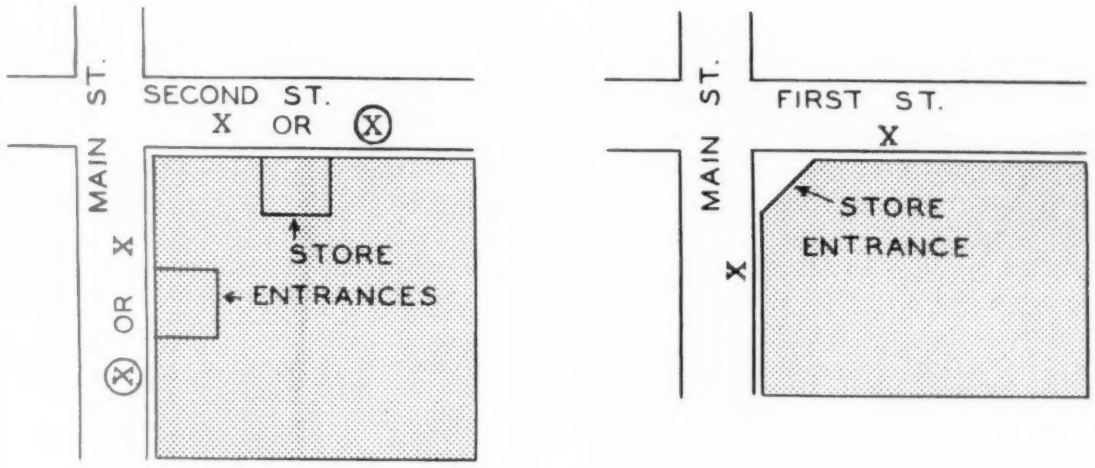
When checking traffic we generally omit counting certain classes of pedestrians. Naturally we do not count mendicants. Nor do we count children or teen-agers unless the teen-agers are obviously shopping. We do not count messengers, convention delegates, or workers such as plumbers, electrical repair men, etc. There are circumstances under which most or all of these classifications would be counted but generally we eliminate them from our check.

We have classified pedestrian traffic into three general groups. They must be made rather arbitrarily by the checker, but this can be done with reasonable accuracy by persons with very little experience. The nomenclature of these classes is also somewhat arbitrary. The first classification we call "structural" (or "everyday") traffic. This group is made up of men and women who are employed in office buildings, shops and factories, and takes its name from these "structures." This traffic would exist regardless of retail stores or other ground floor uses and is more or less constant every day. While this traffic has some purchasing power, more detailed study is usually necessary to arrive at its proper value to the specific retail establishment under consideration.

The second classification we have called "lane" traffic. This group is made up of people moving from one point to another definite point. People in this group are generally made up of young executives going out for their morning coffee, messengers taking the day's deposits to the bank, people en route to the post office or courthouse, women going to the theater, etc.

The third group of traffic is the most interesting - the shopping group. As we have mentioned before, it does not take a checker very long to be able to sift this group from the others. Of the shopping group, the most important segment is made up of the woman family shopper. We have made thousands of pedestrian traffic studies in St. Louis and other large cities to determine the location advantages for different types of merchandise and have found that it is possible to separate women with reasonable accuracy into the family shopper who visits the district to shop and who purchases for herself, her family and her household, and the individual shopper who generally works in the district and purchases for herself alone. These two classes of women traffic have distinct patterns of entering and leaving the district and of providing their maximum influence in the traffic stream. The former enters the district about 10:00 A.M., reaches a peak between 1:30 to 3:30 P.M., and leaves the district at 4:00 P.M.; the latter enters the district going to work between 8:00 A.M. and 9:00 A.M., reaches a peak during the noon hour, leaves the district for home between 5:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M., and does not appear in quantity in the traffic stream during the interim periods. These two patterns are found in the chart on page 451 which shows the percentage of each of the following type shopper that was on the street at each hour of the shopping day: A. women family shoppers; B. women individual shoppers; C. men, executive or professional type; and D. men, clerical type.

When checking four different classifications of traffic we have found it easier



RECOMMENDED LOCATIONS FOR COUNTING TRAFFIC PASSING

CORNER STORES INDICATED BY X , AND Ⓧ (SECOND CHOICE)

to count the traffic moving in one direction only. After a good deal of experimenting we found that 15-minute, 1-direction counts taken in alternate directions and multiplied by two gave virtually the same total as counts formerly taken of traffic moving both directions at once, and had the advantage of putting much less strain on the checkers.

When analyzing traffic counts it is usually necessary to adjust for various factors that may influence its volume. Saturday is the favorite shopping day for most women family shoppers and Monday, Wednesday and Friday are generally favored over Tuesday and Thursday. The influence of sales, the weather and local conventions are other factors that must usually be compensated for in arriving at a final opinion.

While traffic counts are never absolutely conclusive, they are nevertheless frequently very helpful in determining the best location for specific types of retail outlets. They can also be helpful in negotiating a fair lease, and when taken at very long intervals indicate the shift in purchasing power within a district. They are not a substitute for the knowledge and experience of a good leasing agent, although they may be of great use to him.